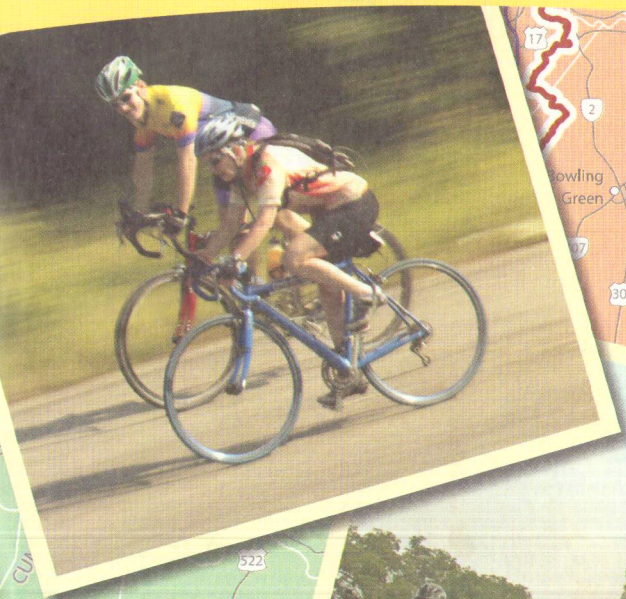
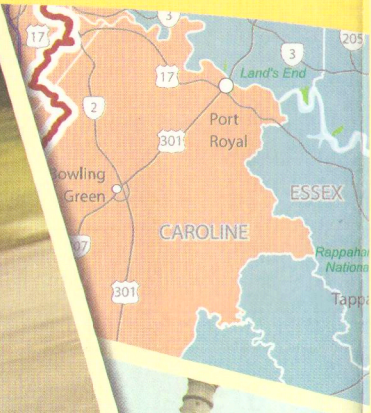
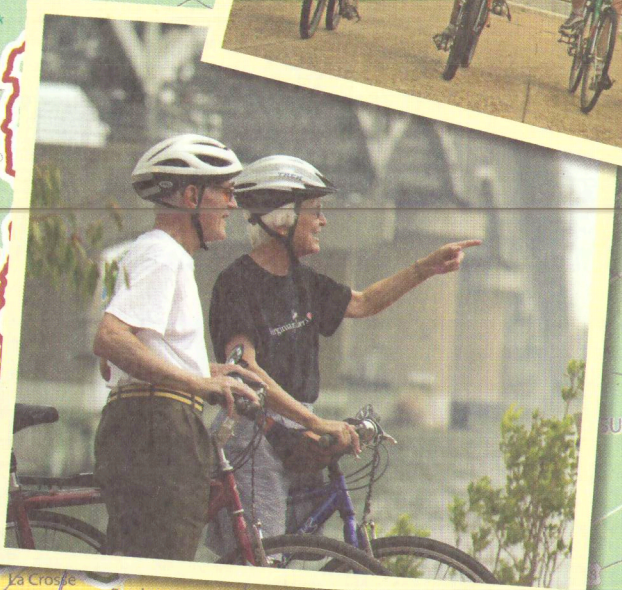
Official State Bicycling Map

BICYCLING *in* VIRGINIA









CYCLING *the* COMMONWEALTH

1 Virginia Capital Trail



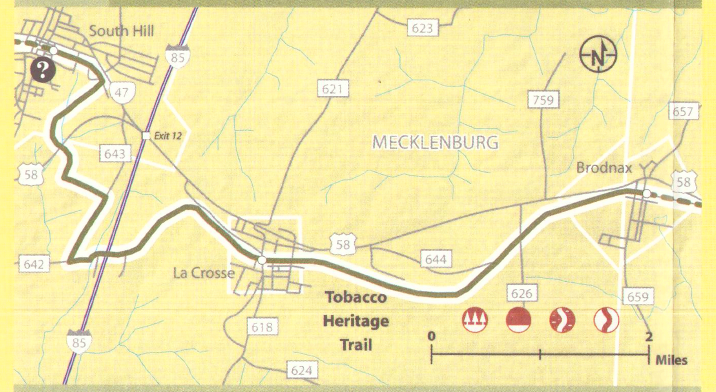
The Virginia Capital Trail is a unique bicycle and pedestrian route linking the first settlement in Jamestown, the Colonial Capital in Williamsburg, and Virginia's modern seat of government in Richmond. When complete, the 54-mile-long shared-use trail will highlight the rich historic, cultural and environmental assets along the Route 5 Virginia Byway – the corridor of America's first westward expansion and the oldest inland transportation route in North America. Upon completion, the trail will feature interpretive sites with information kiosks and bicycling and pedestrian amenities to accommodate users of all ages and abilities.

In Williamsburg, the trail begins at the Governor's Mansion and follows the Colonial Parkway to Jamestown Island, the site of the first permanent English settlement in the New World. The trail then turns west, crossing the Chickahominy River, running through historic Charles City County, passing original James River plantations, the homes of Presidents John Tyler and William Henry Harrison, and numerous Revolutionary War and Civil War battlefields. In eastern Henrico County, the trail returns to the banks of the James River and reaches the heart of the modern waterfront in downtown Richmond, where it connects to the Canal Walk and the James River Park System.

Groundbreaking for the Virginia Capital Trail took place in June 2005. The trail is under construction, and the first phase is scheduled to open by the end of 2006.

*Cyclists should be especially careful crossing the movable-span bridge over the Chickahominy River. A new fixed-span bridge is expected to be complete by mid-2009.

3 Tobacco Heritage Trail



The Tobacco Heritage Trail is an ambitious project that will eventually link Brunswick, Charlotte, Halifax, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg counties with 174 miles of transportation and recreation corridors. The 70-mile phase from Lawrenceville to Clarksville is under active development. Right of way has been acquired, and the first five-mile segment from Brodnax to LaCrosse is open. Using abandoned rail beds, bridges, rights of way and state roadways, the planned system will provide a network to boost transportation, tourism and economic development in rural, historic southern Virginia.

The first section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail was officially opened in September 2005.

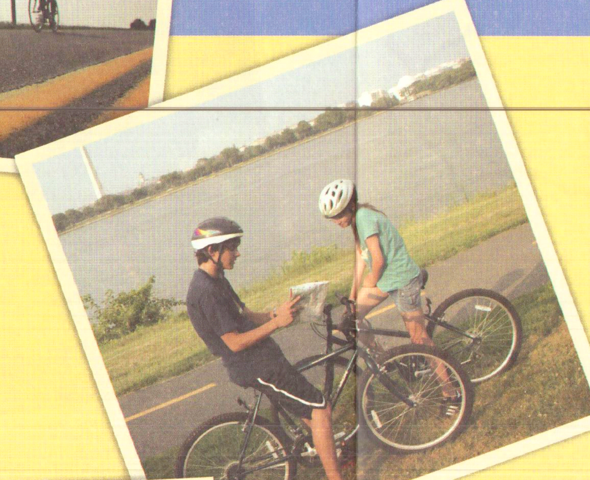
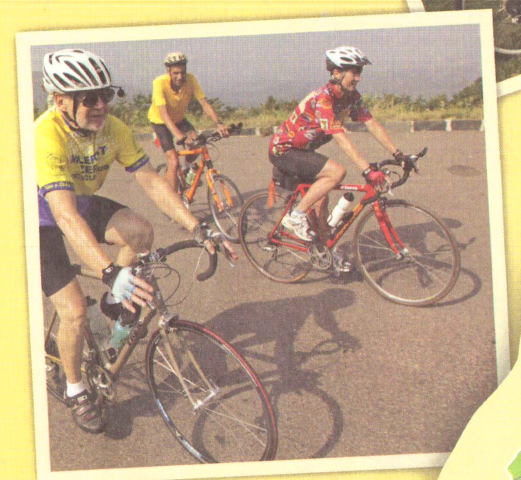
2 Virginia Creeper Trail

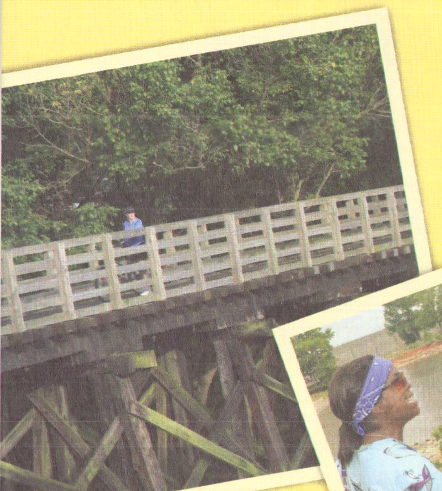


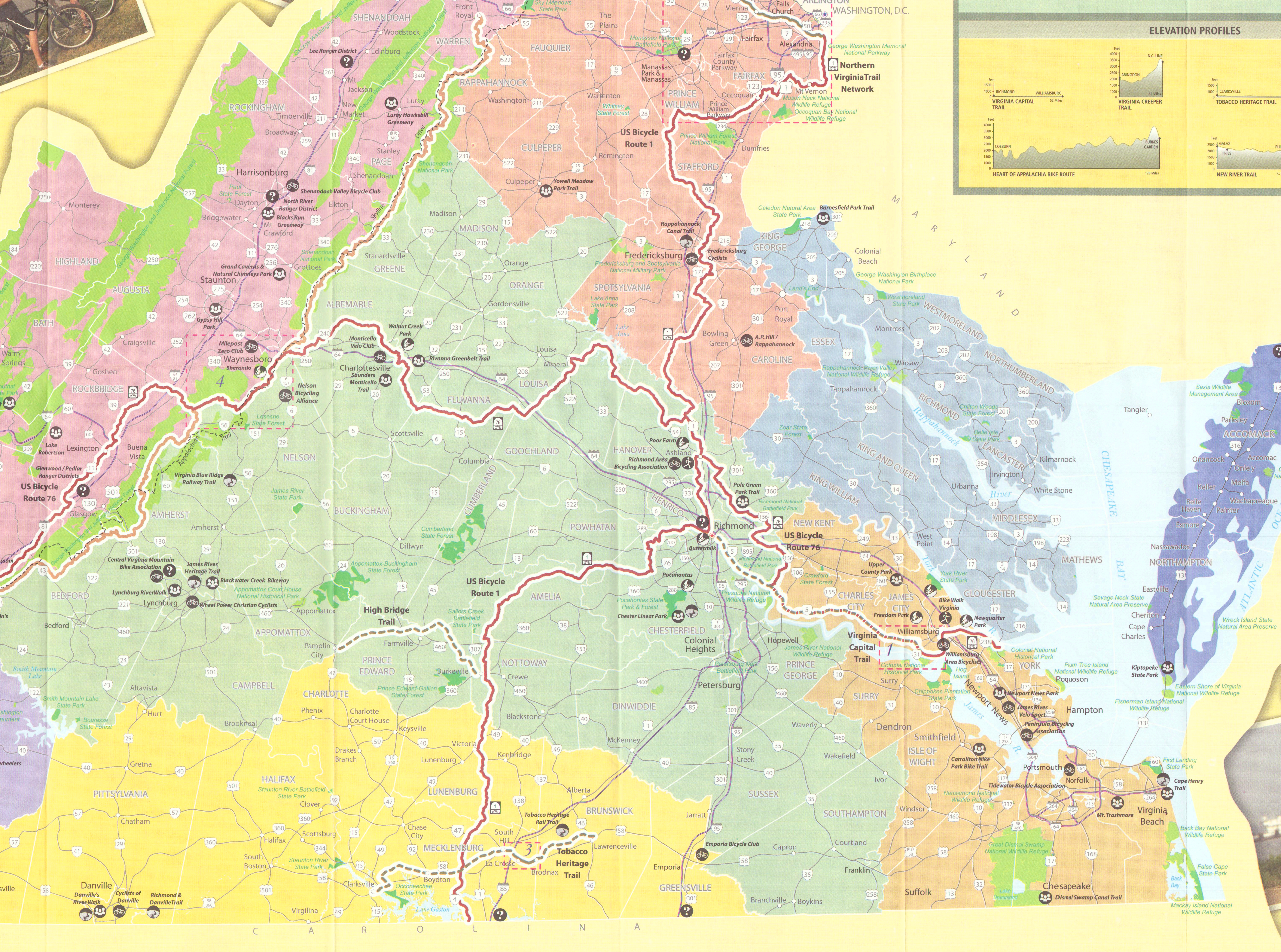
The Virginia Creeper Trail is a 34-mile-long former railroad bed that has become a multi-purpose trail stretching from the mountains to the valleys. It owes its popularity to outstanding scenery, encompassing two geographic regions of Virginia. The Blue Ridge Mountains lie to the east, and the Ridge and Valley province of Virginia extends to the west. Because of this geographic variety, the Creeper Trail can be divided into distinctly different yet equally beautiful halves. Take two days to see both parts of the trail or ride the entire length from White Top to Abingdon in a single day-long excursion.

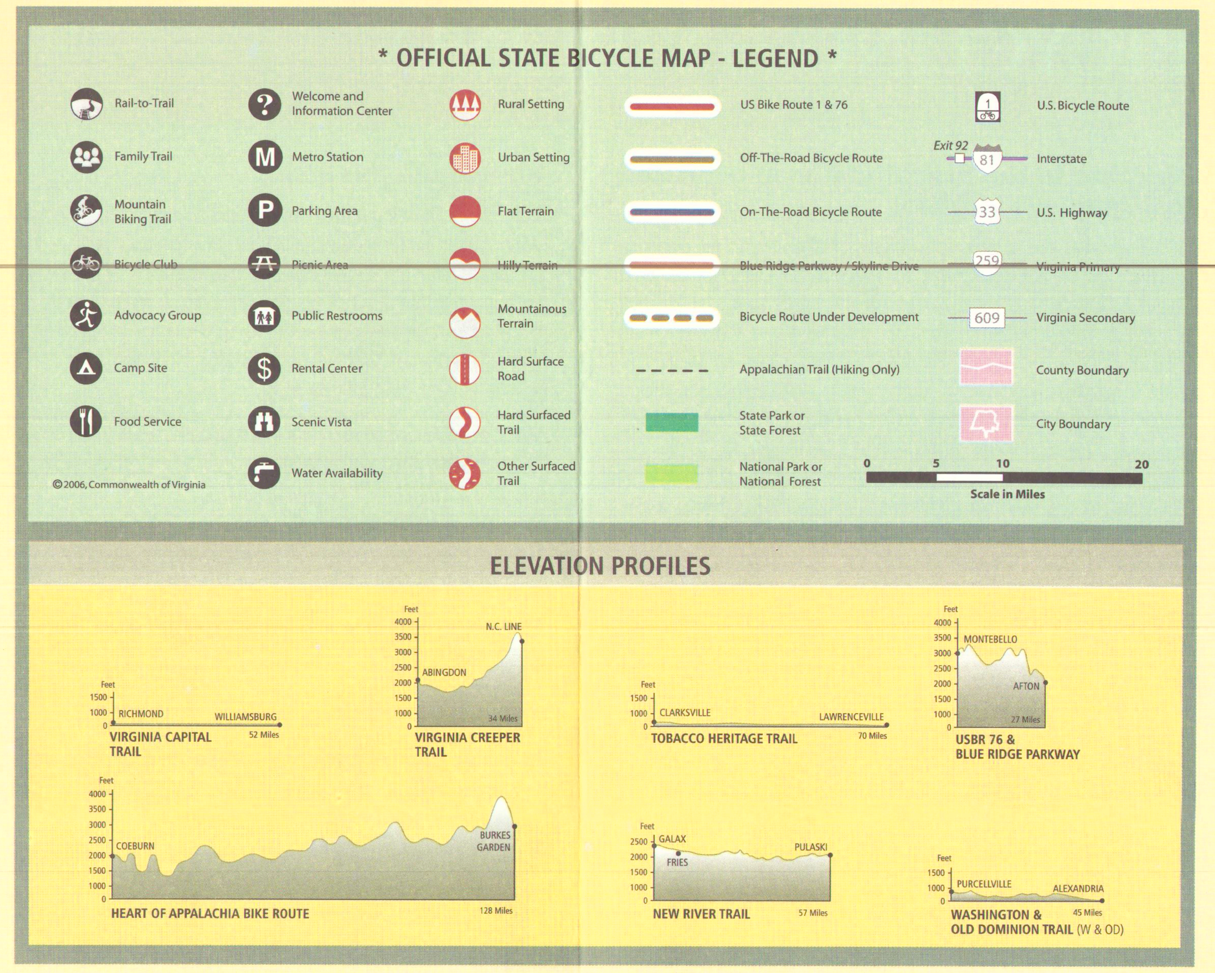
Under Development...
High Bridge Trail State Park is under development, and it will create a 34-mile rail-to-trail conversion from Burkeville in Nottoway County to rural Pamplin City in Appomattox County. Attractions along the trail include the college town of Farmville, and High Bridge, which played a role during the final Confederate retreat to Appomattox Courthouse.










BICYCLING *in* VIRGINIA

Welcome to the first official map dedicated to *Bicycling in Virginia*!

Whether you are a seasoned rider or a new fan of cycling, let this map be your gateway to a world of new experiences. There is something here for everyone: 838 miles of United States Bicycle Routes 1 and 76; the Virginia Capital Trail, connecting the colonial capital of Williamsburg with the state's modern capital of Richmond; numerous locations for off-road mountain bike rides; and a range of facilities suitable for beginners and families with young children. The urban trails network of northern Virginia is here, and the wild and challenging Heart of Appalachia Bike Route – 128 miles of paved and unpaved roads through remote, mountainous southwest Virginia.

Bicycling in Virginia focuses on routes and information of most interest to cyclists. The map presents setting, terrain, elevation and surface conditions. Inset enlargements of selected locations give details for parking and other facilities. The colored areas of the map show Virginia's state and national parks and tourism regions, making it easy to find more information about food, lodging and other attractions.

We hope you will use this new map to enjoy our beautiful commonwealth; to visit natural and cultural attractions; to ride for transportation, health, and fun; and to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. There's a lot to do on two wheels! **Enjoy the ride, and welcome to *Bicycling in Virginia*.**

Please remember to share the road and travel safely and legally. For tips on how to do that, see the panels to the right.

How to use this map:

Bicycling in Virginia is intended to be used in conjunction with other Virginia Department of Transportation maps and Virginia Tourism Corporation publications. **Please visit the following Web sites for much more information about bicycling**, such as contact information for local bicycle clubs. These resources will be continually updated and are integral to the fullest use of this map.

Virginia Department of Transportation:
virginiadot.org/bikemap
Virginia Tourism Corporation:
virginia.org/bikemap
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (*State Parks*): **dcr.virginia.gov/parks**

Features to help you plan a trip that matches your abilities:

- elevation profiles
- icons denoting setting, terrain and surface type

Symbols and categories represented on the map:

- **Rails-to-trails:** these are former railroad rights of way converted to non-motorized corridors.
- **Family-friendly facilities:** these are suitable for beginning cyclists and families with children.
- **State parks:** all state park roads have low speed limits, and some parks feature special cycling facilities.
- **Mountain bike trails:** we show a sample of off-road locations. It is not a comprehensive listing.
- **Bicycle clubs:** contact them for information about local conditions and suggested rides.
- **Facilities under development:** the Virginia Capital Trail, Tobacco Heritage Trail and High Bridge Trail State Park are under active development. The Virginia Capital Trail also constitutes a portion of the East Coast Greenway, a project under development to connect urban areas from Maine to Florida.

4 United States Bicycle Route 76 & Blue Ridge Parkway



Virginia is home to 838 miles of the **U. S. Bicycle Route** system – more than any other state. Established officially by the federal government in 1982, the Virginia sections of U.S. Bicycle Routes 76 and 1 cross the state from east to west and north to south. Just south of Waynesboro, near Afton Mountain, USBR 76 runs along the Blue Ridge Parkway for 25 miles, overlooking the Shenandoah Valley to the west and Nelson County's Rockfish Valley to the east.

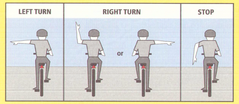
The Blue Ridge Parkway is a 469-mile scenic route that runs through 39 counties in Virginia and North Carolina. It is the most visited unit of America's National Park Service, and it is popular among bicyclists because of its limited access and lower traffic levels compared to most public highways. Traveling the parkway by bicycle is an unforgettable experience, but requires planning and caution. Temperatures can change rapidly since parkway elevations range from 650 feet to over 6,000 feet. Avoid the parkway during fog and be especially careful in any of the 27 tunnels. Bicycles are allowed only on paved roadways.

RIDING SAFELY *and* LEGALLY

Ride with traffic, not against it. The bicycle is a vehicle under Virginia law and should be operated as such. Always ride on the right side of the road.

Obey all traffic laws, regulations and signals. Every person riding a bicycle on a highway shall have the rights and duties applicable to a driver of a vehicle. Always yield to pedestrians. Ride responsibly.

Signal all turns and stops. Hand signals tell motorists what you intend to do – be predictable. Signal as a matter of law, courtesy and self-protection.



Use extra caution making left turns. Bicyclists may make left turns as either motorists or pedestrians do. To make a pedestrian left turn, the bicyclist should continue straight across the intersecting road, obey the traffic signals, turn left at the corner, and proceed as usual. Bicyclists may also dismount and walk in the crosswalks of the two intersecting roads. If traffic control devices specify the method of crossings, those directions must be followed. Please refer to the examples shown here:



Ride defensively. Expect the unexpected, especially at intersections. Never assume that a motorist sees you until you have made eye contact. Watch out for parked vehicles pulling into traffic or vehicle doors opening into your path. Scan the road behind you by looking over your left shoulder. Many cyclists use rear-view mirrors. Watch out for road hazards such as potholes, glass and wet leaves. On trails watch out for other users and potential hazards, such as dogs on leashes!

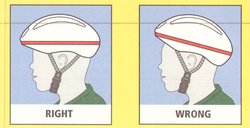
Ride at a safe speed. Slow down in congested areas – you might need the extra reaction time.

Give a clear warning when passing other road or trail users. Consider using a handlebar-mounted warning bell.

Ride single file. Virginia law allows riding two abreast if traffic is not impeded, but riding single file is still recommended for safety.

Pull completely off the road or trail when stopped. Be sure to signal that you are slowing or stopping.

Wear a helmet. Always wear a helmet when you ride. Helmets dramatically reduce the risk of head injury in a bicycle crash.



Wear bright clothing. White or bright clothing will help make you visible to motorists.

Lights required at night. Virginia law requires that every bicycle ridden between sunset and sunrise must have at least one white headlamp with the light being visible at least 500 feet to the front. The bicycle must have a red reflector on the rear visible at least 600 feet to the rear. On roads posted with speed limits of 35 mph or greater, the bicyclist must also be equipped with at least one red taillight visible from 500 feet to the rear. Taillights may be steady or blinking and may be attached to the cycle or rider.

Cross railroad tracks at a 90-degree angle. If that is not possible, then dismount and walk your bike across. Always slow down and use caution. Remember – highway grade crossings are the only place where it's legal for bicyclists, pedestrians and/or vehicles to cross railroad tracks.

Give your bike the ABC Quick Check before each ride. Do you have the proper **AIR** pressure in your tires? Do your **BRAKES** solidly engage the rim and stay clear of the tire? Is your **CHAIN** lubricated and properly tensioned? Are the **CRANK** and **CHAINRING** tight, and are the gears working properly?

Be prepared. Never leave home without a water bottle or hydration system, a patch kit, a pump, basic tools, an energy bar and some cash. Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. It's a good idea to carry identification and emergency contact information.



5 Heart of Appalachia Bike Route



The Heart of Appalachia Bike Route is 128 miles of roads and trails in Tazewell, Bland, Russell and Wise counties. The route takes cyclists through some of the most beautiful mountain scenery in southwest Virginia, and it provides a variety of terrain and surfaces, including paved and gravel roads, rail-trails and single-track side trips.

Begin in Burkes Garden, a mountain-ringed bowl 10 miles in diameter that contains some of the most fertile farmland in the state. From there, follow the route along sparsely traveled roads in the Jefferson National Forest, across U.S. Bicycle Route 76 in Russell County, to the end at the Guest River Gorge Trail near Coeburn. Forty miles of side-trails provide access to spectacular natural features such as Russell Creek Falls and The Pinnacle at Big Cedar Falls.

This is Clinch River country. The Heart of Appalachia route offers vistas of mountain valleys and a river crossing on a swinging suspension bridge. Since the ride uses both paved and unpaved secondary roads, experienced riders say that knobby tires on a road bike or hybrid tires on a mountain bike are the way to go. Approach the Heart of Appalachia as a self-supported ride; there are few businesses along the way to provide supplies. Plan ahead, and stock up in the towns of Tazewell, Lebanon and St. Paul.

The Heart of Appalachia Bike Route is the only state bicycle route in Virginia. It was officially recognized by the General Assembly in 1999, when legislators allocated $50,000 to provide signage for the bike route and scenic drive in an effort to promote tourism and economic development.

6 New River Trail

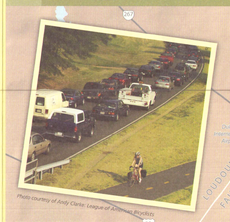


New River Trail State Park in southwest Virginia features 57 miles of trail on abandoned railroad right of way through Grayson, Carroll, Wythe and Pulaski counties. The trail parallels the scenic and geologically unique New River for 39 miles and links numerous other attractions, including Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area and Shot Tower Historical State Park. The route crosses more than 30 trestles and bridges of the abandoned railway and includes two tunnels.

From the Hiwassee trestle south of Pulaski, the trail begins a steady climb southwest to Fries Junction, then forks to provide access to the towns of Fries and Galax. Numerous access points provide entry to the trail, which is the centerpiece of this 765-acre park that averages only 80 feet wide. There are campgrounds and facilities for a variety of visitors, including hikers, cyclists, equestrians, boaters and paddlers.

The truly adventurous might want to try the annual New River Trail Challenge, a triathlon with mountain bike, canoe and running segments–not for the faint of heart!

7 Northern Virginia Trail Network

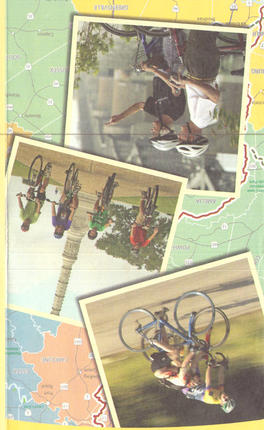


Northern Virginia has the most extensive bicycle transportation network in the commonwealth. Its trails, paths and bicycle lanes accommodate cyclists of all needs and ability levels, from families to commuters to long-distance cyclists. It's a place where you can really avoid congestion by getting around on two wheels in Arlington (one of America's most bicycle-friendly places) or seeking adventure on some of Fairfax County's 600 miles of trails (not all of which are open to cycling). There are bicycle lockers at some Metrorail stations, and you can cross the Potomac at many points for access to the unequaled attractions of Washington D.C.

The centerpiece of the northern Virginia system is the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park (**W&OD Trail**), managed by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. The trail is 45 miles of paved shared-use path for cycling, walking, running and skating. Built on abandoned railbed, the W&OD runs northwest from Shirlington (near Exit 6 of I-395 in Arlington County) to Purcellville in Loudoun County. There are only a few hills, and numerous access points along its length make it suitable for cyclists of all ability levels. It can be quite crowded with morning and evening commuters and weekend riders, so come prepared to share the trail with others, and take care at the many road crossings.

The Cross County Trail of Fairfax County is another unique achievement. It's the result of strong cooperation between government and citizen volunteers and offers urban Fairfax County an alternative north – south corridor more than 40 miles long. The trail links a number of stream valley park properties, and it officially opened in May 2006 after nearly a decade of planning and development. The Cross County Trail is partially paved.

There are a great number of other trails, bicycle routes and bike lanes available for cyclists in northern Virginia that can't be shown in a single map of this size. With these as with other aspects of *Bicycling in Virginia*, the map is best regarded as an entry point to a wealth of information available through the supporting Web sites. There you will find links to free maps available from local governments as well as to commercial cycling maps offered for sale.



BICYCLING *in* VIRGINIA

Official State Bicycling Map

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



Tim Kaine
Governor of Virginia

I invite you to enjoy the tremendous cycling opportunities here in Virginia. Bicycling is an activity for all ages that promotes healthy lifestyles and reduces congestion. Before heading out, I encourage you to safety check your bike, learn the rules of the road and wear a helmet. I hope you will join me in using this great new map to plan your travels and enjoy *Bicycling in Virginia*!

DCR Virginia State Parks

Bike Virginia *is for Lovers*

VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

Copies can be obtained from the **Office of Public Affairs 1401 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219**
804-786-2801
(TTY users, call 711)
VAmaps@VirginiaDOT.org
VirginiaDOT.org

Official State Bicycling Map for FREE distribution only. This map is furnished free of charge and is not to be sold or used for promotional, commercial or political purposes.

Printed on recycled paper

© 2006, Commonwealth of Virginia